

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 FRB-03

INR-07 NSAE-00 USIA-06 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03 SP-02

CIEP-01 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 NSC-05 SS-15 STR-04

CEA-01 PA-01 PRS-01 IGA-02 L-03 DOTE-00 /085 W

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R 271928Z OCT 76

FM AMEMBASSY NASSAU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8781

SECDEF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L NASSAU 1677

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR BF US

SUBJ: LOAN OF AUTEC ROAD EQUIPMENT TO BAHAMAS GOVERNMENT

REF: NASSAU 1602

1. EMBASSY HAS RECEIVED NOTE FROM MINEXTAFF DATED 21
OCT 1976 REQUESTING TEMPORARY USE OF AUTEC EQUIPMENT
TO SURFACE A ROAD ON ANDROS. TEXT OF NOTE IS AS FOLLOWS:

QUOTE (COMPLIMENTARY OPENING) AND HAS THE HONOUR ON BEHALF
OF THE MINISTRY OF WORKS TO RELAY TO THE EMBASSY, THE REQUEST
BY THE MINISTRY OF WORKS FOR THE TEMPORARY USE OF CERTAIN
MACHINERY LOCATED AT THE AUTEC FACILITY IN ANDROS.

THE MINISTRY OF WORKS PROPOSES TO CONSTRUCT APPROXIMATELY
TWENTY-ONE MILES OF ROAD FROM FRESH CREEK TO BEHRING POINT,
ANDROS. IT IS THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE MINISTRY OF WORKS THAT
THE MACHINERY LISTED BELOW MAY BE MADE AVAILABLE BY THE AUTEC
AUTHORITIES TO THE MINISTRY OF WORKS FOR USE ON THE PROPOSED
PROJECT WHICH IS EXPECTED TO BE COMPLETED IN APPROXIMATELY
SEVEN MONTHS:

3 NO. 5 YD. DUMP TRUCKS

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1 NO. 3 YD.DUMP TRUCKS

1 NO. GRADER
1 NO. STEEL WHEEL ROLLER
1 NO. GRID ROLLER
1 NO. HTD 15 BULLDOZER (D11) WITHOUT RIPPER
1. NO. SWEEPER
1 NO. VEHICLE TYPE TAR DISTRIBUTOR
1 NO. VEHICLE TYPE WATER DISTRIBUTOR
2 NO. FRONT END LOADERS

ON BEHALF OF THE MINISTRY OF WORKS, THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS HAS THE HONOUR TO SEEK THE KIND APPROVAL OF THE EMBASSY'S GOVERNMENT FOR THE TEMPORARY USE OF THE EQUIPMENT LISTED ABOVE.

(COMPLIMENTARY CLOSE) UNQUOTE

2. AS STATED IN PARA 4 OF REFTTEL, EMBASSY'S INITIAL REACTION TO MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS AND HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY REP FROM CENTRAL ANDROS, DARELL ROLLE'S INFORMAL REQUEST WAS THAT IT MIGHT BE IN OUR INTEREST TO ALLOW GCOB TO USE EQUIPMENT. OUR REASONING WAS THAT GCOB KNOWS EQUIPMENT IS THERE, THAT IT IS NOT CONTINUALLY IN USE, AND THAT IF GCOB WOULD UNDERTAKE TO PAY FOR FUEL, REPAIRS, OPERATORS, INSURANCE, ETC., OUR WILLINGNESS TO BE COOPERATIVE IN THIS PRENEGOTIATION ENVIRONMENT WOULD BE TO USG ADVANTAGE, GIVEN ROLLE'S POSITION OF INFLUENCE IN THE CABINET. FURTHER, AUTECH COULD BENEFIT BY GAINING A BETTER SURFACED ROAD TO THE AIRFIELD AND THE NEXT DOWN RANGE SITE.

3. AFTER FURTHER CONSIDERATION, HOWEVER, IT APPEARS TO US THAT, IN THE LONG TERM, THE DISADVANTAGES OF PROVIDING THE EQUIPMENT COULD WELL OUTWEIGH ANY ADVANTAGES GAINED. WE NOTE THAT IN THE FORMAL REQUEST, THE GCOB MAKES NO MENTION OF PAYING FOR FUEL, PROVIDING OPERATORS, PROVIDING INSURANCE COVERAGE, AND ARRANGING FOR REPAIRS. ADDITIONALLY, THE LENGTH OF ROAD TO BE SURFACED IS NOW ESTIMATED TO BE 21 MILES VICE TEN MILES AND THE TIME ENVISIONED IS NOW SEVEN MONTHS VICE THREE TO FIVE MONTHS.

4. WHILE ANY AFFIRMATIVE RESPONSE COULD BE CONDITIONED TO ASSURE GCOB'S ASSUMING SUCH RESPONSIBILITY, EMBASSY CAN,
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NEVERTHELESS, FORESEE THE POSSIBILITY OF INNUMERABLE PROBLEMS OF LOGISTICS AND/OR REPAIRS TO DEVELOP OVER THE PERIOD OF SEVEN MONTHS, NOT TO MENTION CONFLICTS OVER EQUIPMENT USE/ABUSE WHICH WOULD CREATE FRICTION IN AN OTHERWISE ESSENTIALLY FRICTION-FREE ATMOSPHERE AT AUTECH. IN ADDITION "LOAN" OF EQUIPMENT IN THIS INSTANCE MIGHT WELL ESTABLISH UNFORTUNATE PRECEDENT FOR FUTURE GCOB LEVIES NOT ONLY IN AUTECH BUT OTHER THREE EXISTING U.S. FACILITIES IN BAHAMAS. IN EMBASSY'S VIEW SUCH PROBLEMS

COULD EVENTUALLY STRAIN AND UNDO SPIRIT OF COOPERATION WHICH "LOAN" WAS INTENDED TO FOSTER. WE ALSO BELIEVE IT UNWISE IN THE LONG VIEW TO ENCOURAGE GCOB TO CONSIDER U.S. FACILITIES WHEREVER LOCATED AS READY POOLS OF HEAVY EQUIPMENT FOR USE IN OUT ISLANDS VICE DOING THEIR OWN PRE-PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING TO LOCATE THEIR OWN EQUIPMENT THERE. FINALLY, THE EXPERIENCE OF BARTAD IN LOANING EQUIPMENT TO GCOB IN NORTH ANDROS FOR ROAD WORK HAS BEEN UNSATISFACTORY AND SUPPORTS THIS CONCLUSION. REPORTEDLY, EQUIPMENT LOANED BY BARTAD GENERALLY RETURNED LATE AND IN POOR CONDITION, AND REQUESTS FOR USE MADE WITHOUT TAKING INTO ACCOUNT PROJECTS OWN NEEDS.

5. CONSEQUENTLY, EMBASSY WOULD PROPOSE THAT WE RESPOND TO GCOB STATING THAT THE LEGAL AND JURISDICTIONAL PROBLEMS PRECLUDE ANY INFORMAL "LOANS" OF EQUIPMENT. WE MIGHT ALSO STATE ORALLY AT DELIVERY OF RESPONSE THAT MATTER MIGHT BEST BE ADDRESSED DURING FORTHCOMING FACILITIES NEGOTIATIONS.

6. THIS APPROACH WOULD BE CONSISTENT WITH WHAT WE HAVE TOLD MINISTER ROLLE AND THE GCOB BEFORE; -- SPECIFICALLY THAT AUTECH EQUIPMENT IS NOT AVAILABLE, EXCEPT IN EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES, FOR USE IN GCOB CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS AND THAT NO PAST CASE WHERE EQUIPMENT USE WAS AUTHORIZED WAS TO BE TAKEN AS A PRECEDENT FOR FUTURE.

7. EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE DEPARTMENT AND DOD'S VIEWS ON MATTER.
TAYLOR

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